

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 322

By Massey

A RESOLUTION to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of
"Rocky Top," a state song of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly take great pleasure in
acknowledging the touchstones of our State's cultural heritage, artifacts both tangible and not
that act as a timeless thread, connecting us to past and future generations of Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, "Rocky Top," the song perhaps most synonymous with our great State, is a
significant part of both our cultural and musical heritage, and this year marks the fiftieth
anniversary of its composition; and

WHEREAS, the iconic song was written by husband and wife powerhouse songwriters
Boudleaux and Felice Bryant, the duo responsible for classics such as "Love Hurts," "Wake Up
Little Suzie," and "Bye Bye Love"; and

WHEREAS, the couple began writing songs in a travel trailer in Georgia; from these
modest beginnings was born an unparalleled songwriting career, beginning with "Country Boy,"
which was recorded in 1948 by Little Jimmy Dickens and reached No. 7 on the country charts;
and

WHEREAS, this success prompted the Bryants to move to Nashville, where they
continued to pen songs; in 1957, they wrote a string of hit singles for the Everly Brothers, and
their place on the country-pop songwriting stage was forever fixed; and

WHEREAS, many artists have recorded Boudleaux and Felice Bryant's songs
throughout the years, including Bob Dylan, Elvis Presley, Elvis Costello, Paul Simon, Emmylou
Harris, Roy Orbison, Ray Charles, Loretta Lynn, James Taylor, and Kitty Wells; Buddy Holly,
who rarely recorded songs that were not his own, recorded a version of the couple's
composition "Raining in My Heart"; and

WHEREAS, "Rocky Top" was written in August 1967 in room 388 of the Gatlinburg Inn in Gatlinburg, the Bryants' preferred room in the hotel that they frequented; this room has since been christened the Rocky Top Suite, in homage to the Bryants and the song they penned therein; and

WHEREAS, that same year, the Osborne Brothers released the upbeat bluegrass number as a B-Side to "My Favorite Memory"; Nashville disc jockey Ralph Emery, understanding the potential of "Rocky Top," played the song on air, and the song took on a life of its own from there; and

WHEREAS, "Rocky Top" was an overwhelming success for the Osborne Brothers, becoming their signature song; the popularity of the song was such that the University of Tennessee's Pride of the Southland Band performed their rendition at a football game against the University of Alabama on October 21, 1972; and

WHEREAS, since that time, the song has become a staple of University of Tennessee football games, and hundreds of thousands of fans over the years have shouted the lyrics of "Rocky Top" as they cheer on the Volunteers; and

WHEREAS, the significance of "Rocky Top" has been recognized by various organizations; in 1982, it was adopted as an official state song by the Tennessee General Assembly, and in 2015, *USA Today* named "Rocky Top" the number one fight song; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, the University of Tennessee began The Rocky Top Institute in conjunction with the Bryant family; students involved with the institute have developed a brand around "Rocky Top," creating various products that find inspiration in the lyrics and designing logos, all of which are produced and then sold in local retail stores; and

WHEREAS, for half a century, Tennesseans near and far have been singing of "Rocky Top, Tennessee," and certainly generations to come will continue this tradition; and

WHEREAS, "Rocky Top" is part of the cultural fabric of our State, and it is fitting that we commemorate the milestone anniversary of this timeless song; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Tennessee's state song "Rocky Top," a crown jewel of our musical and cultural heritage.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.